Group behind Amendment 2 gets new leader

By **Michele Ames**
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The group that authored Amendment 2 has named a new leader who said he has plans that will again put the organization in the public eye.

Jessen: To lead Colorado for Family Values.

Colorado for Family Values, which has been without an executive director for nearly two years, on Wednesday announced the appointment of Paul Jessen, pastor of the Colorado Springs Restoration Fellowship Foursquare Church.

The Springs-based group gained national prominence when it spearhead-

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From NEWS1

ed a voter-approved measure that would have barred state and local laws that provided protection from discrimination in employment or housing based on sexual preference. The amendment, passed in 1992, was declared unconstitutional all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. Group members collected 85,000 signatures to place Amendment 2 on the 1992 ballot, but current group leaders would not reveal how many people remain on their mailing list.

Jessen, who took over as pastor of Restoration Fellowship Foursquare more than a year ago, is no stranger to community activism in this arena. During his nearly 10 years as pastor at the Long Beach, Calif., Foursquare Church, he was an outspoken critic of City Council initiatives that eventually allowed homosexuals in Long Beach to register with the city as domestic partners.

Locally, Jessen is a volunteer chaplain for the Colorado Springs Police Department and a member of the Colorado Springs Association of Evangelicals.

In his speech accepting the position, which he said he did not seek but accepted when asked, Jessen said the group would renew its activism in the area of opposing what he sees as "the forced affirmation of homosexual behavior in our communities." He said the group was also planning to work on retaining the "traditional legal definition of marriage" and helping those "trapped in homosexual behavior."

A news release prepared by the group said Jessen's appointment "signals a new level of activity" for the organization. But group officials stopped short of detailing or outlining initiatives they have planned. When asked about potential ballot initiatives, Jessen answered "maybe."

Will Perkins, who has been acting director, said the group has been searching for leadership since Kevin Tebedo resigned in 1996.

"We've been looking for the timing," Perkins said. "The time is right now."